
BOROUGH of CHARD

Annual Report
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
for the Year ending 31st December, 1949

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER:

Medical Officer of Health:

A. M. McCALL,
L.M.S.S.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., C.P.H., D.P.H.,

Sanitary Inspector:

P. H. WEBB,
M.Inst. M. & Cy.E.

BOROUGH OF CHARD

Annual Report of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Chard.

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my report for the year 1949.

This is the first complete year I have been with you in Chard, and I have taken the opportunity to alter the form of my report. As you will see I have kept the tables and statistics apart as far as possible from the report. I have done this in the hope my report will be more readable and will have a wider appeal.

I would like to see these annual reports read by the public of Chard. They would then know a great deal more of what is done for them by their Council, and I trust develop health consciousness.

I am, Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

A. M. McCALL,

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Population.—The Registrar-General gives the estimated population of Chard for the mid-year 1949 as 5,284.

Birth Rate.—The Birth Rate in Chard in the last few years has increased. The same is true in the Country as a whole. This does not mean that more people are getting married, but that people are getting married younger. At 18.9 per 1,000 it compares favourably with 16.7 for England and Wales and is a slight increase on last year. It will be noted that there are 6 illegitimate births; this should not be regarded as an indication of the town's moral character, all were born to residents of "Braeside," one of the County Hostels for unmarried mothers who come from outside to Chard for their confinement.

Death Rate.—The chief causes of Death are shown in Appendix A. Table 2. Heart disease has been the greatest cause of death. Taken together with other diseases of circulation it caused almost half the deaths. Cancer was second only to Heart disease. Other causes of death included Bronchitis, Tuberculosis, and associated lung conditions such as Pneumonia.

Infant Mortality. Only one death occurred due to a congenital abnormality, there were 2 stillbirths.

Maternal Mortality.—There were no cases of maternal mortality during the year.

Social Conditions.—Your social services remain unchanged since last year. Unemployment remained at a very low level throughout the year.

SECTION B.

General Conditions of Health Services of Area.

Since the National Health Service Act came into existence many of the services previously run locally become the responsibility of the Local Health Authority, that is, the County Council. We in Somerset are fortunate in the degree of delegation of authority allowed by the County Medical Officer of Health. As a result, I, as your representative, am still responsible for the daily administration of the welfare and school services.

Infant Welfare Clinics.—These are held every 1st and 3rd Tuesday at the Recreational Club. During the year 1949, 1,225 attended the clinics. This is a considerable increase on last year. The arrangements have been altered and now a Doctor is present at every clinic instead of only once per month. That this extra service is appreciated is shown by the fact that an average of 32 see the Doctor each month now, as compared with 8 previously. No treatment is given, but in cases where it is indicated the child is referred to the family Doctor usually by letter. The willing co-operation of the private Practitioners in Chard has greatly enhanced the value of this service. Great credit for this satisfactory state of affairs is due to the Secretary, Mrs. Daniel, the District Nurses and the Committee—to whom I am very grateful.

Immunisation.—This is carried out at the Welfare Clinic. Combined vaccine for use against Diphtheria and Whooping Cough is now available and despite the fact that it requires 3 injections at monthly intervals 49 children were immunised during the year.

Vaccination.—Since the new Act ceased to make vaccination compulsory there has been a complete lack of interest. However, I hope to be able to give a more satisfactory report next year. Vaccination is now available at the Clinic.

Health Visiting.—The District Nurses do the Health Visiting in Chard and their efforts have been a considerable factor in improving the attendances at the clinics, and in following up defects found in children at the school medical inspections.

Maternity Services.—At present this work is carried out by the District Nurses and when needed the Private Practitioners are consulted. Cases requiring hospitalisation have to be sent to Taunton and Crewkerne. It is regrettable that they cannot be accommodated nearer their homes and relations. The County do not provide clinics for antinatal or postnatal cases.

Day Nursery.—This is a great asset to the town and obviously appreciated. It was full throughout the year. The building is modern and excellent in every way. The 43 children are well cared for and very happy. It is well organised and functions excellently.

Tuberculosis Clinic.—This is organised and run at the Sanatorium by Dr. Pascall. Follow up is done by the Health Visitor.

Homeless and Aged.—These are housed at Sunnylands adjacent to the Sanatorium.

School Medical Service.—This service is organised by the County Education Committee. During the year I have visited every school in Chard twice and at these inspections 600 have been examined. Details are given in Appendix B, Table 1.

Dental Service.—Somerset like all other Health Authorities have been finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their Dental services owing to staff resignations since 1948. Chard has been particularly unfortunate and only emergency treatment was available for the children here.

Ophthalmic Services.—The County service available for children of all ages has been working extremely well. All cases referred from School medical inspections are seen promptly and then regularly as necessary. We have experienced delays in obtaining glasses, but this is a widespread difficulty and our local Optician has always given fullest co-operation to ensure that the children's needs are met with as little delay as possible.

Ambulance Service.—The Chard Ambulance was used on 301 occasions, covering a mileage of 9,567. Mainly, patients were conveyed to Taunton and Musgrove Park Hospitals, but occasionally journeys were made to Bristol, Bridgwater and Exeter. Two Ambulances are in use, and the Service is maintained by the voluntary service of the personnel of the Chard Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade.

Home Help Service.—The County Home Help Service, so valuable in times of confinement, illness or old age, is well established in this Area and has worked smoothly when required.

SECTION C.

Prevalence of, and Control over Infectious Diseases and Other Diseases.

A summary of notifications will be found in Appendix C. Table 1.

The town has been remarkably free from infectious diseases during the year 1949, and I am pleased to report that there were no cases of Infantile Paralysis.

There were no cases of Diphtheria, due no doubt to the immunisation which has been carried out during recent years.

SECTION D.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

(a) Sanitary Circumstances.

Climatic Conditions.—This year will be remembered mainly for the extremely dry summer. Rainfall was considerably below normal.

Water Supply.—The summer months were critical times over most of the Country, and Chard was no exception. The well levels were very low and caused the Water Committee considerable anxiety. Restrictions had to be imposed.

At a critical time when water was extremely short a very strong fuel oil taste was noticed by consumers. An immediate investigation was carried out and a leaking drum of petrol used in the pump was found in the vicinity of one well. This was a typical example of carelessness which so easily can jeopardise a whole supply.

Drainage and Sewerage.—I am pleased to report that the work of reconstruction of the Sewage works was completed during the year. There are some teething troubles, but when the works are functioning normally they will be a great asset to Chard.

Public Cleansing.—Weekly removal of refuse was carried out in the town.

The streets despite increasing traffic were kept in a creditable condition. However, the public could help considerably by placing their papers, cigarette boxes, etc., in the proper receptacles, particularly in the area of bus stops.

Rats and Mice.—Routine treatments were carried out on the Council properties. In addition, private properties were dealt with and test baiting of sewers done regularly.

Swimming Bath.—It is unfortunate that there is no public swimming bath in Chard. Some children have been able to use the Grammar School Bath by kind permission of the Head Master.

However, I would like to see a public bath in Chard. Facilities for swimming in this part of Somerset are few and it would fulfil a great need.

Factories Act.—The statistics will be found in Appendix D, Table 1.

(b) Housing.—Statistics. These will be found in Appendix D, Table 2.

Post War Housing.—The number of houses completed during the year was 23, this makes a total of 133 since the war. There are 370 on the waiting list.

The number of dwellers at Furnham Camp have been steadily reduced. At one time there were 40 families living there and by December, 1949, it had been reduced to 17. We now have definite hope of re-housing all the people there.

I am very pleased that we have at last decided to include a proportion of flats in our future programme. These will be suitable for old persons as well as young married people. It is a step in the right direction, and I am pleased that Chard is taking the lead.

(c) Inspection and Supervision of Food.

Milk and Ice Cream.—The new regulations concerning the retailing and sampling of milk have been complied with. Ice Cream premises were inspected and registered where they conformed to standard.

Food.—Meat inspections were carried out at the Slaughter House. This building is not up to the sanitary standard required, and deficiencies have been pointed out to the appropriate authorities.

APPENDIX A—TABLE 1

Chard Borough, 1949.

BIRTH RATE:		M	F
Live Births:	Total	50	49
	Legitimate	45	48
	Illegitimate	5	1
Still Births:	Total	1	1
	Legitimate	1	1
	Illegitimate	—	—
Deaths of Infants under 1 year:	Total	1	1
	Legitimate	1	1
	Illegitimate	—	—

Birth Rate—18.9 per 1,000.

APPENDIX A—TABLE 2

Chard Borough, 1949.

TABLE OF DEATHS:	Total	M	F
	71	35	36
Causes of Death:			
Tuberculosis	3	1	2
Syphilitic disease	1	1	—
Influenza	1	1	—
Cancer	13	8	5
Heart disease	23	10	13
Intra Cranial Vascular Lesions	11	3	8
Bronchitis	6	4	2
Pneumonia	1	1	—
Diarrhoea	1	—	1
Digestive disorders	1	1	—
Congenital malformation	1	1	—
Suicide	1	1	—
Other violent causes	1	—	1
All other causes	7	3	4

Death Rate—13.4 per 1,000.

APPENDIX B—TABLE 1

SCHOOLS

Name of School	No. of children examined	No. Immunised
Chard Nursery	19	
" "	24	
" "	25	
Chard Infants	58	
" "	74	
Chard Junior	96	
" "	52	
" "	92	
Chard Secondary Modern	74	
" " "	86	
TOTAL	600	

APPENDIX C—TABLE 1

Infectious Diseases

Scarlet Fever	1
Whooping Cough	2
Measles	2
Puerperal Pyrexia	3
Erysipelas	1
TOTAL	9

Analysis of cases notified :

	-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	65+	Not known
Scarlet Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough ...	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	1
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—

TUBERCULOSIS

Age Group		New Cases		Non-respiratory		Deaths		Non-respiratory	
		Respiratory				Respiratory			
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
-1	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-5	...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5-15	...	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
15-25	...	1	3	—	—	—	1	—	—
25-35	...	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	—
35-45	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45-55	...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55-65	...	1	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
65+	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL		6	5	1	—	2	3	—	—

APPENDIX D—TABLE 1

Factories Act, 1937

1. Inspections for the purpose of provisions as to the Health (including inspections made by the Sanitary Inspector) :

Premises	No. on Register	Inspection	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	31	9	1	Nil
Other premises in which Sect. 7 is enforced by the Local Authorities (excluding Outworkers premises) ...	21	7	2	Nil
TOTAL	52	16	3	Nil

2. Cases in which defects were found :

Particulars	Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	Referred by H.M. Inspector	No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
Want of Cleanliness ...	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors ...	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary conveniences :					
(a) Insufficient ...	3	1	Notice served—order placed with builder. Plans submitted and passed.		
(b) Unsuitable or defective ...	—	1	—	1	—
TOTAL ...	3	3	—	1	—

Part 8 of the Act

Nature of work	Outwork	No. of cases in default in sending in lists to Council	Sections 110 and 111	Notices served	Prosecutions
	No. of Outworkers in August List in reqd. by Sect. 110		No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists		
	23	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

APPENDIX D—TABLE 2

Housing Inspections :

1.	(a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for Housing defects under P.H. or Housing Acts ...	34
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	71
2.	(a) Number of dwellings (included under sub-head (1) above which were inspected and recorded under H. Con. Reg. 1925 and 1932 ...	11
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	16
	(c) Number of houses in which no action was found necessary ...	7
3.	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ... (This figure includes houses already condemned.)	83
4.	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... Housing Action :	4
	(a) Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	4
	(b) Number of houses demolished voluntarily or in consequence of informal action ...	Nil
Action under Statutory Powers during the year :		
Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 & 16 of the Housing Act, 1936		
Proceedings under Public Health Acts :		
(1)	Number of dwelling Houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ...	14
(2)	Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after serving of informal notices ...	12
	Proceedings under Sections 11, 13, & 26 of the Housing Act, 1936 ...	Nil
	Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 ...	Nil